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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography lists eight books, all available in English, dealing with cultural and literary material about Vietnam and the Vietnamese. All items are intended for students at the elementary (K-6) level and include fairy tales, children's stories, descriptions of life in the country, history, folk tales, and geography. Those appropriate only for the upper elementary level are so designated. Each entry gives full bibliographic and availability information. (TL)

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Indochinese Refugee Education Guides

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ELEMENTARY EDUCATION SERIES: Vietnamese History, Literature & Folklore

Following is the first of several bibliographies which deal with cultural and literary material about Vietnam and the Vietnamese available in English. The entries are all for the elementary level (K-6); those appropriate only for the upper elementary level are so designated. When available, we have given prices for the books.

1. The Beggar in the Blanket and Other Vietnamese Tales, retold by Gail B. Graham, illustrated by Brigitte Bryan. New York: The Dial Press, 1970. 96 pp. $4.95.

   Translated from French language sources in Vietnam by a famous woman reporter/writer who lived in Vietnam during 1966 and 1967. The fairy tales collected are her favorite and written for her own children. Some details of these popular stories have been changed, yet the stories are nevertheless delightfully retold and a source of enjoyment for children and adults alike.

2. First Snow, by Helen Contant, illustrated by Vo Dinh. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974. 32 pp. $4.50.

   A children's story featuring a little Vietnamese girl who has learned to accept the cycle of life and death as a natural pattern of the universe when, for the first time, she watched the falling snow in her first winter in the U.S. The story is gentle in style, beautifully illustrated by a well-known Vietnamese artist.

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3. Getting to Know the Two Vietnams, by Fred West, illustrated by Polly Bolian. New York: Coward-McCann, 1963. 64 pp.

   The first half of the book, for upper elementary and junior high students, gives a comprehensive historical background of Vietnam, the achievements of President Diem's administration and the causes that led to its downfall. There is a chapter on the City of Saigon, the people, the transportation, schools, clothing and food.

   The second half deals with foreign aid in Vietnam, primarily Chinese in the North and American in the South. The life in North

Vietnam is presented through the eyes of a boy brought up on a state-run farm. The author also talks about the role of different religions in Vietnam and some cultural features.

"To tell twin stories" is the stated goal of the book, yet there are only five pages devoted to the life in North Vietnam.

The writing is clear, instructive, and supplemented with beautiful illustrations, maps and a chronology of important dates in Vietnamese history.

4. Let's Visit Vietnam, by John C. Caldwell. New York: The John Day Co., 1969. $3.96.

Appropriate for upper elementary and junior high students. The first part of the book gives an outline of the history of Vietnam from the ancient past to the emergence of Ho Chi Minh and the partition of Vietnam in 1954. It also describes the way of life in different areas of the country: the rural, the highlands and the city. The second half is about the American involvement in Vietnam. The book ends with the beginning of the combat troops' withdrawal.

In his account of events, the author tends to relate what is familiar to the Americans, such as the comparison of the nocturnal attacks of the Viet Cong on the strategic hamlets with the Indian attacks during the night in the pioneer days, which help give a clearer picture to the young American reader.

Despite a few errors regarding the historical facts of Vietnam and the language, the book is easy to read, clear, instructive. It is intended for the American student who wants to know the whys and hows of the American involvement in Vietnam.

5. NHAN, a Boy of Vietnam, by Inor Forney, edited by Joann Robinson. Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1969. 25 pp.

Some scenes of life in Saigon seen through the eyes of a 10-year-old paper boy from a poor family. Includes: the inside of Nhan's one-room house, the presidential palace, the policeman and a would-be saboteur, the New Year's celebration in Chinatown, the moon festival, and central market. The book is filled with interesting illustrations which make the reading more attractive to children.

6. Our Friends in Vietnam, by Inor & E.H. Forney. Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1967. 61 pp. $1.00.

A coloring book presented in the authors' own handwriting. Each page is accompanied with a drawing of the scene described. The book shows activities of ordinary people in cities and rural areas: the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the things they

do, the places they go and so on.

The book is more than a coloring book. As stated, it is "designed for people of all ages who would enjoy painting or coloring in crayon and learning something at the same time about our friends in Vietnam".

7. Southeast Asia, by William A. Withington and Margaret Fisher. Grand Rapids: Fideler Company, 1968. 272 pp.

This is a well-presented elementary geography textbook. The first 13 chapters deal with the area in general (land, climate, history, people, farming, fishing, natural resources, crafts and industry, transportation and communication, festivals and recreations, arts). There follow chapters on each country including sections on history, geography, government, and education. The book is filled with large, interesting black and white photographs which are well-coordinated with the text to illustrate what is being discussed. Maps are also well used to illustrate various types of information.

The sections on Cambodia and Vietnam seem fairly presented although the history, of course, is not up to date. The chapter on Festivals has a description of Tet. Here and throughout the book, there are several good pictures of activities in Vietnam (and Cambodia).

8. Viet Nam: Land of Many Dragons, by Hal Buell. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1968. 142 pp.

This is a simplified history of Vietnam for the upper elementary/junior high level, with about half the book devoted to the period of American involvement. The last two chapters deal with the impact of the Vietnamese war on the U.S. and its possible importance in the world situation. The book is illustrated with many striking black and white photographs. (Because of its publication date (1968) the concluding chapters are dated.)